

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG TO MACAU

REF: (A) HONG KONG 10629; (B) GENEVA 12199; (C) HONG KONG
10327

1. DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED REFTEL A REPRESENT CONTINUATION OF A LONG HISTORY OF FOOT DRAGGING ON THE PART OF UNHCR WITH RESPECT TO THE MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG TO MACAU. MANY MONTHS AGO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BEGAN TO URGE THE UNHCR TO MOVE EXPEDITIOUSLY IN THIS DIRECTION. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH CARPENTER AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN HONG KONG, WITH SAMPATKUMAR AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL IN KUALA LUMPUR AND WITH UNHCR HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA ON A REGULAR BASIS.

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2. THE RESPONSE HAS, FROM THE BEGINNING, BEEN GENERALLY NEGATIVE. THE BASIS FOR THIS RESPONSE HAS NOT BEEN AT ALL CLEARLY EXPRESSED AND IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHY UNHCR HAS RESISTED MOVEMENT OVER THE PAST MANY MONTHS. BOTH THE GOVERNMENTS OF MACAU AND HONG KONG HAVE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. THE HKG HAS, INDEED, EXPRESSED ITS URGENT DESIRE FOR THIS MOVEMENT AND HAS

AGREED TO GUARANTEE TO REACCEPT SUCH REFUGEES FROM MACAU

ON A TEMPORARY ASYLUM BASIS IF THAT BECAME NECESSARY.

3. THE DEPARTMENT NOTES THAT CRS DIRECTOR IN MACAU BELIEVES THAT PER CAPITA CARE AND MAINTENANCE COST CAN BE REDUCED TO \$2.00 A DAY OR LESS. THIS WAS THE FIGURE DISCUSSED BETWEEN ORM DIRECTOR LOWMAN AND CRS DURING LOWMAN'S RECENT VISIT TO MACAU AND WE BELIEVE IT IS PROBABLY A REALISTIC AND ATTAINABLE GOAL. WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY SAMPATKUMAR CHOSE TO MAINTAIN FIGURE AT \$3.00 PER DAY WHEN CRS APPARENTLY READY TO GO NOW TO \$2.50. WE HOPE PAYMENTS WILL BE BASED ON ACTUAL OUTLAYS AND CRS DIRECTOR ESTIMATE OF FUTURE COSTS WILL PROVE CORRECT.

4. LOCAL UNHCR/HONG KONG REP CARPENTER HAS BEEN EXTREMELY LACKING IN INITIATIVE IN MOVING THIS PROGRAM FORWARD. WE DO NOT READ REFTTEL A AS A SUGGESTION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND COLLUSION ON CARPENTER'S PART AND INVITE CONGEN HONG KONG COMMENT ON THIS POINT. WE DO, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT HE HAS NOT SO FAR SHOWN COMPETENCE TO DEAL WITH THE EXTREMELY COMPLEX PROBLEMS WHICH HE FACES IN ARRANGING FOR THE CARE OF THIS RAPIDLY GROWING CASELOAD IN SUCH A HIGH COST AREA.

5. THE UNHCR HAS INDICATED THAT ITS BUDGET FOR THE INDO-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM HAS GROWN RAPIDLY TO OVER \$26 MILLION FOR 1978 AND HAS ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL USG ASSISTANCE IN MEETING THESE EXPENSES. YET, CONGEN HONG KONG IS CORRECT IN REPORTING THAT UNHCR, IN THE FIELD, HAS EXHIBITED A TOTAL LACK OF URGENCY ABOUT MEETING THE HOUSING PROBLEM IN HONG KONG ON A REALISTIC AND ECONOMIC BASIS. CONGEN AND HKG BELIEVE AN ESTIMATE OF A CASELOAD OF 4,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BY FALL OF THIS YEAR NOT UNREALISTIC. CONTINUED EXPENDITURES AVERAGING OVER \$7.00 PER REFUGEE IN DAILY CARE AND MAINTENANCE COSTS WOULD AMOUNT TO OVER \$10 MILLION ON AN ANNUAL BASIS FOR THIS SMALL SEGMENT OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT UNHCR IS NOT GIVING ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM AND THAT CARPENTER IS PROBABLY NOT QUALIFIED TO DEAL WITH IT.

6. DURING VISIT BY CODEL WOLFF TO HONG KONG, MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE BECAME AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM AND HAVE QUESTIONED HA/ORM AS TO WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO REDUCE THESE COSTS. ON BASIS OF FORTHCOMING ATTITUDES ON PART OF GOVERNMENT OF MACAU AND HKG SHOWN DURING RECENT VISIT BY LOWMAN, WE HAD HOPED

RAPID PROGRESS COULD BE MADE. THIS HAS NOT, SO FAR, BEEN
THE CASE, AND VIGOROUS ACTION BY THE UNHCR WILL CLEARLY

BE NECESSARY IF APPROPRIATE ANSWERS ARE TO BE AVAILABLE
WHEN DEPARTMENT SEEKS FURTHER FUNDS TO SUPPORT UNHCR PRO-
GRAM FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

7. REQUEST US MISSION RAISE THIS PROBLEM WITH SENIOR
LEVELS AT UNHCR ON AN URGENT BASIS. VANCE

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